

Much of the public firmly believes that the flow of data should be relatively uninhibited. People like to have the ability to record and time or space-shift their favorite programs. The current state of affairs that the FCC is about to consider-- whether or not to allow the use of a "broadcast flag" in digital television-- would erode the public's expectation of these shifting activities. Much of the public don't understand the technology, what it does and who is behind the various sides of the argument. While the public does have a few organizations on it's side, they are under-funded in relation to the broadcasting industries resource allotments to an issue like this.

I think it is imperative that the FCC think about the current expectations of consumers and how that would change with something like the broadcast flag. More so, the changes would take place without a large majority of the population realizing that they could have expressed their opinion in a comment such as the one I am writing now.

The broadcast industry makes the argument that digital television is such a high-quality signal that people will be able to distribute, edit and make unpaid uses of their programming. But they convinced the FCC to mandate digital television in the first place! As a regulatory body, I would like the FCC to be suspicious of the agenda that they are pushing and more adequately orient themselves with regulations intended to allow relatively free-flow of information and, at a minimum, fair use. The broadcast industry wants viewers to be able to control what we time and space-shift... I would rather not allow them to be able to control when and where I view my favorite programs.

As an educator, (I teach basic astrophysics to undergraduates at UC Berkeley) I would find the broadcast flag as a direct conflict with my ability to record a program and show it to my classes. This is something I do two to three times a year and find it invaluable for explaining recent discoveries in ways that undergraduates can understand. And I wouldn't want to have to duplicate the effort of the producers of the programs.

Please, consider an alternative to the broadcast flag and be wary of one-sided agendas like the one being championed by the broadcast industry.

Thank you for your time,

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